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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03194

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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0240  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1405  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0021  
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0040  
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 5240

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 003194

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G, G/TIP, INL, DRL, NEA/RA, AND NEA/ARPI  
STATE ALSO PASS TO USTR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/18/2010  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: UAE PROGRESS ON TIP ACTION PLAN

REF: A. ABU DHABI 3074

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 2833  
[1](#)C. STATE 99833

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: With two weeks to go before the end of the 60-day TIP action plan, the UAE continues to make progress in addressing the suggested steps in the action plan (ref C). The following is a review of progress made to date on the mini-action plan, keyed to the six points provided by G/TIP. We are continuing to encourage additional progress from our UAEG interlocutors on a daily basis. End Summary.

NATIONAL COORDINATOR  
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Action Plan Recommendation: Appoint a national coordinator with sufficient authority to oversee the implementation of this mini-action plan.

UAEG Response:

-- On July 13, Yousef Al Otaiba, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi's International Affairs Director, was appointed as the UAE's national coordinator to oversee the implementation of the action plan.

IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION FOR CAMEL JOCKEYS

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Action Plan Recommendation: Identify and provide protection, within the U.A.E., for at least 700 foreign child camel jockeys that are trapped in exploitation and begin providing them with appropriate rehabilitation, repatriation, and reintegration services. The number of victims identified and protected at government-provided shelters or elsewhere will be verified by the International Organization for Migration or UNICEF.

UAEG Response:

(Note: On May 8, 2005, the UAE Ministry of Interior and UNICEF signed a project agreement for identifying, rescuing, rehabilitating and reintegrating up to 3,000 children estimated to be in the UAE working in the camel jockey industry.)

-- Since June 2, the UAE has established three shelters in Abu Dhabi for housing and rehabilitating children rescued from camel farms. Since June 2, 111 have been repatriated in cooperation with UNICEF, and 188 are currently in shelters. We have requested additional data, including the nationalities of the children. In Dubai, the number of camel jockeys rescued totaled 39 as of July 18, according to the head of Dubai Immigration; the rescued jockeys are being transferred to shelters in Abu Dhabi.

-- The Ministry of Interior has assigned police patrols to the racetracks to enforce the ban and monitor the tracks and farms.

-- The Ministry of Interior's Social Support Center has public hotline numbers for persons to call who have information about kidnapped children brought to the UAE.

-- The first robot camel jockey race was held July 18 to demonstrate that the UAE is serious about ) and capable of - replacing child camel jockeys with lightweight robots.

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

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Action Plan Recommendation: Investigate and begin prosecuting at least 10 persons responsible for the trafficking, abuse, and exploitation of trafficked children in the camel racing industry. Investigate and commence prosecution of at least 5 cases involving the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. Investigate and commence prosecuting at least 5 cases of abuse of foreign domestic workers and laborers. Persons convicted should receive sufficient penalties reflecting the heinous nature of trafficking crimes. All investigations and prosecutions should be conducted with due regard to individual human rights.

UAEG Response:

-- On July 5, President Khalifa issued a federal law that prohibits persons below age 18 from either sex from participating in camel races, and subjects traffickers to jail sentences not exceeding three years, and/or fines of not less than 50,000 Dirhams (\$13,500). In the case of repeat offenders, the penalties will be doubled. The law took effect upon signature.

-- We are awaiting statistics on investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases, abuse, and exploitation of child camel jockeys, of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, and of trafficking of persons for the true purpose of labor exploitation.

MECHANISM FOR IDENTIFICATION AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS

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Action Plan Recommendation: Develop and implement a formal mechanism for the systematic identification and protection of trafficking victims, including women in sexual servitude and

women and men trafficked as domestic workers and laborers. Expand the availability of hotlines for foreign workers to report instances of abuse and to seek assistance.

UAEG Response:

-- The UAE Government is developing several systems for the identification and protection of trafficking victims. The UAE's Judicial Training Institute is developing an anti-trafficking course that includes such a mechanism and that will be introduced in the police training curriculum. The course would be offered at Abu Dhabi's Judicial Training Institute as well as at Abu Dhabi and Dubai police academies.

-- The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has established a website for workers to report abuse and seek assistance.

-- The Dubai government has set up a Dubai-wide labor complaints website and hotline, which enables domestic workers, laborers, and other foreign workers to lodge complaints. This service includes free government-provided legal representation for complainants. A new Dubai labor committee is preparing to launch a public awareness campaign, including through the distribution of pamphlets, T-shirts, and caps, to let workers know about these new measures, including the website and hotline. The labor committee has also begun to complete inspections of labor camps and sending its report directly to Dubai's Crown Prince and his Executive Council.

ESTABLISHING SHELTERS; FORMAL PROTECTION

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Action Plan Recommendation: Establish shelters in Abu Dhabi and Dubai for trafficking victims, particularly for abused domestic workers, women forced into sexual servitude, and male laborers, where such victims can receive protection, including counseling, medical, physiological, and other appropriate rehabilitation assistance regardless of their immigration status. Articulate how the U.A.E. government will extend formal protection to domestic workers and other laborers, currently without any protection outside of their employment contracts.

UAEG Response:

Since July 2, the UAE Government has taken the following actions to establish formal protection for domestic workers and other laborers:

-- Dubai Immigration has finalized a plan to construct a shelter for trafficked victims in Dubai within one year's time. Construction will begin as soon as a building permit is issued by the municipality, hopefully within weeks. In the meantime, Dubai police are referring victims to a private shelter. The Government has promised to grant this shelter a license.

-- The UAE Government is collaborating with source countries by allowing the operation of shelters for potential victims. Currently, there are 7 such shelters for trafficking victims being operated by private parties or by source country embassies with the consent of the UAE Government. Embassy and Consulate General staff have visited some of these shelters and spoken to both the operators and shelter residents. These facilities shelter approximately 100 victims per day based on Embassy and Consulate General contacts with each shelter. Shelter victims are provided counseling, medical, psychological, and other appropriate rehabilitation assistance.

-- The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs issued a ruling June 28 requiring employers to grant a break to workers engaged in outdoor work between 12:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. in July and August (the hottest months of the year). Those who violate the rule will face a jail sentence of up to six months or a fine ranging from 3,000 Dirhams (\$810) to 10,000 Dirhams (\$2,700) ) repeat offenders could get their license

suspended.

-- The Minister of Labor has told us that the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Interior plan to include minimum wages of domestic workers on their visas to prevent employers from changing their wages upon the workers' arrival in the UAE.  
-- The Minister of Labor has told us that the Ministry of Labor plans to require that employers open a bank account and directly deposit monthly wages. Non-compliance by employers to these requirements would carry penalties.

#### PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

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Action Plan Recommendation: Conduct broad public awareness campaigns highlighting the rights and obligations of domestic workers and laborers, and the consequence of abusing such workers.

#### UAEG Response:

There has been a steady media outreach by the UAEG, with frequent articles in the major daily papers intended to raise public awareness about working conditions and workers' rights:

-- "Gulf News" June 6: The Ministry of Labor formed a committee to try to resolve the case of 200 Asian workers who protested the non-payment of wages.

-- "Khaleej Times" June 16: The Ministry of Labor will inspect and penalize companies that violate occupational safety rules in a move to protect laborers from health hazards, such as working outdoors for long hours during the summer.

-- "Khaleej Times" June 19: The Ministry of Labor intervened in the case of 20 Asian laborers who stopped working to protest their poor living conditions and non-payment of wages.

-- "Gulf News" June 29: The Ministry of Labor began requiring companies which employ more than 150 workers to have a certified safety officer approved by the Ministry.

-- "Gulf News" June 29: The Minister of Labor issued a ruling requiring employers to give outdoor laborers a rest period from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the hottest summer months of July and August. The ruling subjects violators to fines or up to six months in prison. "Gulf News" July 10: The Ministry of Labor announced that 15 local companies would be fined for violating the new rule. "Khaleej Times" July 13: Seventeen companies had been fined to date for failing to observe the midday break rule. "Khaleej Times" July 15: The Ministry has temporarily suspended visa issuance for companies that have defied the rule until it can find a means to collect the fines.

-- "Khaleej Times" July 14: The Minister of Labor has accused some labor recruitment offices from labor source countries of using deception tactics to recruit workers.

-- "Gulf News" July 16: Abu Dhabi police will soon produce booklets listing frequently asked labor questions and answers in Arabic and other languages in an effort to educate the public about their rights under the UAE Labor Law.

-- "Gulf News" July 17: The Ministry of Labor intervened in the case of 150 Bangladeshi workers who had not been paid for five months. The employer has promised to settle the dispute within a week.

-- "Gulf News" July 18, 19: The Government is planning to amend the Labor Law to allow sponsorship transfers to all categories of expatriate workers. A worker would need to obtain approval from the original sponsor before a sponsorship could be transferred. The new employer would pay new visa/sponsorship fees.

-- "Gulf News" July 19: The Ministry of Labor launched an Arabic-language "electronic majlis" (Arabic open forum) on

the Internet for the public. The website is available to any user who would like to comment on Ministry policies. An English site will be available by the end of the year.

COMMENT:

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12. (C) The UAEG has made progress in addressing each of the suggestions in the mini-action plan. We have requested, and are still waiting for, information about investigations and prosecutions, updated camel jockey data, and additional public outreach activities, including public statements about workers' rights and responsibilities. We will forward this information as soon as it is available.  
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